



ILLINOIS DRUG ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Mark Henry and I have been a police officer in Illinois for approximately 21 years. For 18 of those years, I have been involved in drug enforcement, with the vast majority of that time assigned to a multi-jurisdictional drug task force. In addition, I served as the Administrator for two of those drug task forces, covering a seven year period, which gave me an appreciation for federal funding assistance.

In 2001, I served as Chairman of the Illinois MEG Directors and Task Force Commanders Association which is an umbrella organization for the twenty-plus multi-jurisdictional drug task forces which cover approximately 73 of the 102 counties in Illinois. Once again, I had the opportunity to hear from the various drug unit commanders about the importance of federal funding to their units.

Currently, I serve as the President of the Illinois Drug Enforcement Officers Association, commonly referred to as the IDEOA. The IDEOA has approximately 1000 members, consisting of federal, state, county and local officers from all parts of Illinois. The IDEOA believes effective drug enforcement is predicated on establishing viable lines of communication and coordination of efforts among law enforcement entities. A significant percentage of our membership are, or have been at one time or another, assigned to one of the 20 plus multi-jurisdictional drug task forces which exist in Illinois. The IDEOA is one of 43 such state organizations throughout our nation, each of them concerned about proposed elimination of JAG assistance.

I mentioned my background to ensure you that I am quite familiar with the state of drug enforcement in Illinois, especially as it pertains to local law enforcement and the role played by multi-jurisdictional task forces. Whether by design or necessity, drug enforcement in Illinois is divided into a multi-tiered approach. Here is how I see the breakdown in Illinois.

First, the Chicago HITDA is a friend to the multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Illinois. Chicago HIDTA coordinates and conducts much of the drug enforcement occurring in Cook County, which encompasses the city of Chicago. The multi-jurisdictional drug task forces partner with Chicago HIDTA when local investigations migrate to Chicago, which happens frequently when moving up the drug dealer food chain. All the multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Illinois utilize HIDTA's de-confliction system to ensure officer safety. Chicago HIDTA also provides analytical support to any unit that requests assistance. Chicago HIDTA Director Donahue will provide additional information during this hearing.

Second, DEA, also a great partner in this strategy, assists state and local law enforcement whenever they can. However, DEA and the many other federal agencies focus on attacking the top levels of the drug pyramid. At the same time, local police departments